

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION LIBRARIES



3 9088 01138 8873



L'EXPOSITION
UNIVERSELLE



WORLD'S • FAIR • COLLECTION

PARIS, 1889

THE CHEFS-D'OEUVRE

EDITION DE LUXE

LIVRAISON TWO

COPYRIGHTED, 1889, BY G. B.

PARIS: BARRIE FRÈRES
PHILADELPHIA: GEORGE BARRIE

PN
4803
W32
1889
v 2
Chmoxa

CHEFS-D'OEUVRE

1889





1889

THE ART



F all the heroes of mythology none have furnished more entertainment to artists and poets of all ages than Actæon, the grandson of Cadmus. His unfortunate indiscretion has given birth to a wealth of compositions, suggestions, figures and tropes which have amused mankind at his expense through innumerable generations. The more literal painters and sculptors have preferred to gloss upon the straightforward story of his end as it is related by Ovid and Pausanias; the penmen have sometimes gone off into futile speculations, as that "having ruined himself by the expense of supporting a large pack of hounds and a hunting establishment, it was reported that he had been devoured by his dogs." Diodorus Siculus and Euripides, shocked at the

cruelty of the chaste goddess in the popular version, pretend that the young man showed contempt to her, and was about to eat of the sacrifice that had been offered to her; the latter author also says that





FRENCH SECTION.]

CEILING OF THE ODÉON THEATRE.

FROM THE PAINTING BY J. PAUL LAURENS.

In default of them, she took up some water—after the manner of enchanters—and threw it over the intruder, who forthwith found himself transformed into a stag, and was run down and devoured by his own dogs, while his ignorant attendants cheered them on, and filled the woods with shouts of “Actæon!” summoning him to come and see the sport. The pack of these hounds is said to have been fifty strong, and their names were preserved by several Greek poets. Ovid gives thirty-six, which are interesting as showing the fashion of the ancients in these matters.

Though this painting was exhibited in the Salon of 1879, the artist brings it forward as his *pièce de résistance* in the Exposition ten years later; his most important exhibit after it being the charming study of “Psyche,” from the Salon of 1883. The first picture, it was thought, would have secured the medal of honor of the Salon were it not that the artist was a member of the jury, and, therefore, out of the competition; the second received one hundred and eighty votes out of the necessary one hundred and eighty-six for the same recompense. Somewhat mellowed and yellowed by the transformation of the varnish during its ten years of existence, the “Diane” remains the largest and most important composition of its author and one of his masterpieces. It was purchased by M. Duncan for the sum of thirty-seven thousand five hundred francs, and has been exhibited in New York for a brief period. M. Lefebvre has long been known as one of the first of portrait painters, and five of these examples of his talent are included in the list of his works in the palace of the Fine Arts.

SO important a representative of the modern French school as Jean Paul Laurens is naturally entitled to all the privileges that the somewhat elastic construction of the Exposition catalogues will permit, and we find his works entered accordingly, not only in the regular Fine Arts group, limited to paintings executed within the last ten years, but not necessarily present in the buildings of the Champ de Mars,



GERMAN SECTION.]

THE SMOKER. FROM THE PAINTING BY CLAU'S MEYER.

but also in the Retrospective Exhibition. In the latter is his “L'Interdit,” painted in 1875, and now the property of the Museum of Havre; that sombre and most original composition in which the old story of the tyranny of the Church is again set forth; the closed and barricaded doors of the sanctuary, the unburied dead, and the dread edict of excommunication nailed on the wall. Down stairs, in the modern galleries, are his “Agitator of Languedoc” preaching to the dignitaries, from the Salon of 1887; a new



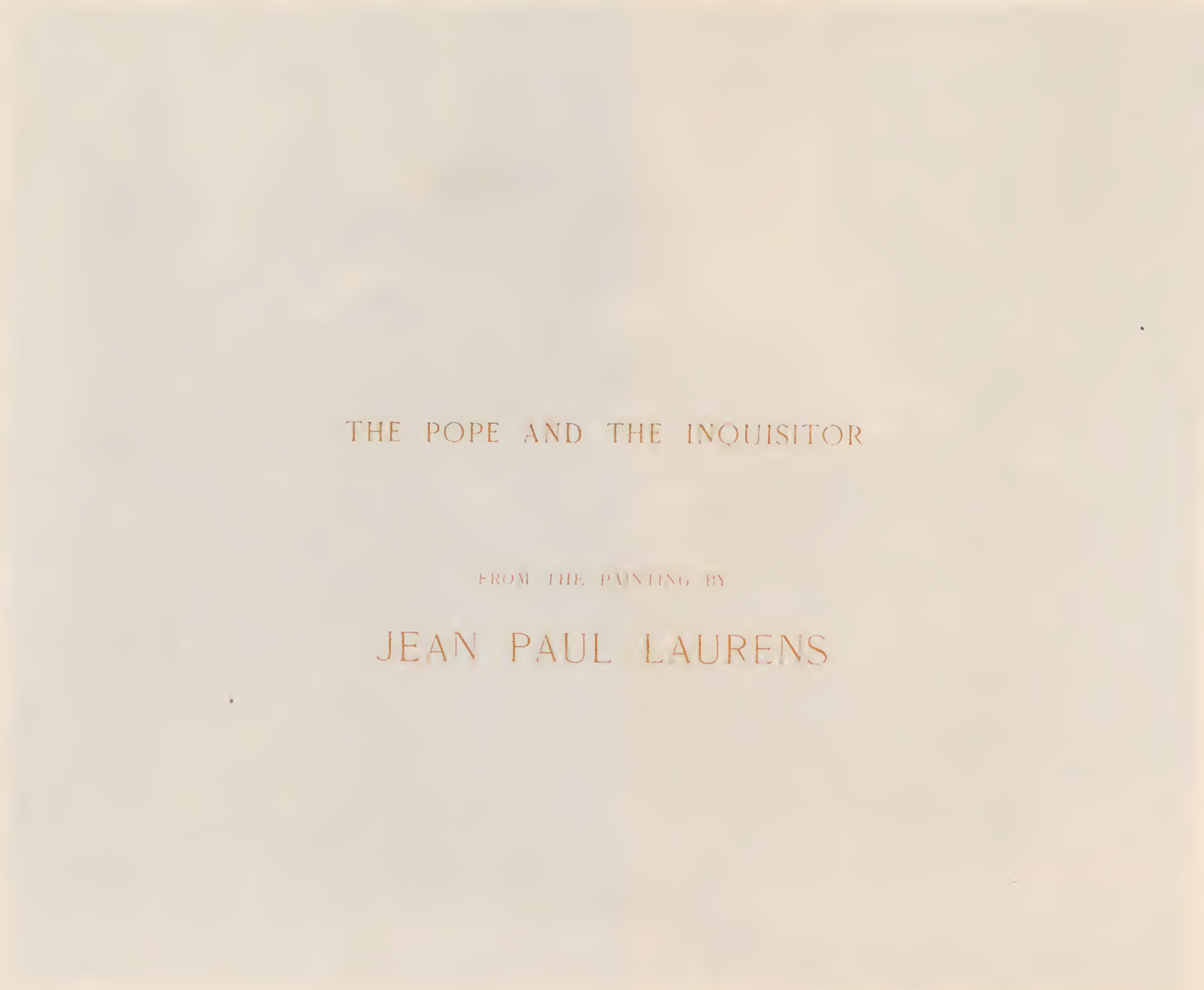
FRENCH SECTION.]

ROGER AND ANGELIQUE. FROM THE PAINTING BY J. BLANC.

work, a strong study of Thomas d'Aquinas reading and annotating; "The Pope and the Inquisitor," reproduced by our photogravure, and formerly exhibited in the triennial exhibition of 1883, and two portraits, one of a lady, and one of M. Mounet-Sully in the rôle of Hamlet. Excepting the latter, all these paintings may be considered to represent that phase of his art—though not in its most lugubrious aspect—by which he is popularly known; and two of the three works catalogued, but not exhibited, are also devoted to this gloomy, mediæval, ecclesiastical history, "Les Emmurés de Carcassonne," in the Luxembourg, and the "Last Moments of Sainte Geneviève," on the walls of the Pantheon. "The Deliverance of the Captives of Carcassonne" is certainly not one of the painter's masterpieces; his earlier work, "The Excommunication of Robert the Pious," also in the Luxembourg, would have been much better but that it was barred out by the statute of limitation. And although the French critics profess to consider the Pantheon decoration as a chef-d'œuvre and a monument of art, the unprejudiced verdict of posterity will probably decide that the vast wall space has been covered by labor heavy-handed

rather than inspired. As compared with the truly spiritually-minded work by Pavis de Chavannes on the same wall—the youth of the same saint—it is of course put out of court; but then M. de Chavannes has seldom equalled, himself, this admirable painting. But even the somewhat *fade* and bloodless contribution of Cabanel, across the transept, seems to show truer ideas of mural decoration and of artistic distinction than these vigorously rendered figures, realistic and somewhat brutal angels as well as beggars, and which, by their tremendous modelling and strength of light and shade, quite destroy any semblance of the wall which they are supposed to embellish but not to demolish.

But the third of these *extra muros* exhibits is one which reveals the artist not only as working within the limits of the greatest respect for his novel trade of decorator, but also as a painter who carries on his palette none but the sunniest and most cheerful of colors and in his imagination the lightest and fairest of visions. So complete is the surprise of the visitor to the old theatre of the Odéon who lifts his eyes to the new decoration of the ceiling and learns that it is by Laurens, that he generally refuses to believe his informant. Over his head he sees an immense and most novel composition, so spirited, so beautiful and so radiant, that Tiepolo might have designed it and Paul Veronese painted it. The great flattened dome of the Plafond is partially covered by a translucent awning, over which burns a midsummer sky of unequalled splendor and through which bursts a flight of naked goddesses, of surprising bigness and fairness and of wonderful whiteness, pinkness and creaminess. That such a conception and such an execution should have proceeded from this painter, who has been compared to Zurbaran and described



THE POPE AND THE INQUISITOR

FROM THE PAINTING BY

JEAN PAUL LAURENS



as "a man of granite" and "a monk of the epoch of the Crusades," only goes to show that the limitations of genius are not always well defined.

In "Le Pape et l'Inquisiteur," of our plate, the artist recurs to his historical themes and typifies the papal power in its close relation with that Holy Inquisition which it fathered in France, Germany and Italy, and protested against in Spain. The inquisitor, in his black and white Dominican robes, reads from a formidable yellow parchment, enforcing his points with one long forefinger on the table; the pope, who may be any one of a long line, listens attentively. A cardinal's hat lies on the table, and the papal arms are emblazoned on the cloth; the hat, the cloth, the edges of the nearest book, the pope's foot cushion, his cap, his cape, his chair and even the darker squares of the tiled floor, all contribute to an ingeniously varied scheme of reds, to which the purple skirt adds another note, and the yellow of the furniture trimmings and the grays of the wall furnish the necessary contrast. The painter is rather fond of playing these variations on these ecclesiastical reds; sometimes, as in the cloak of the "Death of Marceau," he strikes a very bold note. In the present canvas, the harmonies are discreetly preserved; the unquiet, intellectual search for character, for human interest, is supplemented by a skilful exhibit of purely technical painter's qualities.

M. Ferdinand Fabre, in his *Roman d'un Peintre*, suggests, as a possible explanation of the painter's passion for mortuary subjects, an incident of his youth. Laurens was born, as is well known, somewhere about 1838, in Fourquevaux, a little village in the plains of Lauraguais, and of peasant parents. His first book was a *livre d'heures*, received from his dying mother; his first essay in art, an attempt to copy one of the engravings, a "Nativity," after Vanloo. In the spring of 1851,



FRENCH SECTION.]

ST. ISIDOR, A FARM-HAND. FROM A PAINTING BY L. O. MERSON.

Fourquevaux was invaded by a band of Italian artists, headed by one Antonio Buccaferrata engaged by the curé to decorate the walls of the church. The young Laurens was not long in ingratiating himself with these painters, and secured the consent of his father to join the troupe when it departed. From town to town of the Midi he followed them about, grinding colors, cleaning brushes, and occasionally



FRENCH SECTION.]

BACCHANAL SCENE. FROM THE BAS-RELIEF IN WAX BY C. CLODION.

permitted to paint on backgrounds. In the auberge of the *Coq d'or*, one night, they found the innkeeper in tears over his just dead wife. Buccaferrata, inspired with the idea of making a study of the dead woman's face, shut himself up in the chamber with his sketching materials and the young Laurens to hold the candle that should properly illumine the features of the corpse. But, unskillful as he was, he was so long in executing a drawing that could satisfy even himself, that his assistant, stiff with fatigue and terror, ended by dropping the light and falling into a panic. From the impression produced by this night's vigil, the biographer infers, may have arisen that predilection for deathly things that afterwards distinguished his artistic career. Possibly, but the impressions of youth do not always give character to after life; and the dead hostess of the *Coq d'or* might have been supposed to have had a completely contrary effect on the soul of this painter.

BOTH the English and the American sections of the Fine Arts departments in the Exposition have the peculiarity of striking the unprejudiced visitor as better than he expected. Each of them is claimed to be next best to the great French display, and yet the contrast between them is one of the striking things in this building. "It is stronger than that between the English and the French," says an English art journal; "stronger even than that between the English and the Spanish or Italian rooms." It is not only that the American work shows so much more plainly the result of French influence and training, or that the English evinces that ineradicable fondness for sentiment and subjects which the other avoids;—it is rather a complete and racial difference in the way of setting about the painting of pictures in oil. Part of this lack of similarity is the result of selection,—the walls of the ordinary picture exhibition in the United States will show as dreary an array of domestic, anecdotic, humorous and sentimental subjects as the Royal Academy itself. But a comparatively stern jury sifted out by far the greater part of these story-telling canvases. For the rest, the divergence in artistic methods in the two countries seems to rest on a difference of temperament, which is by no means generally manifest in other things.

The revolt against the traditions of the "R. A." and the growing disposition of the younger men to seek their artistic salvation in French schools are yearly assuming greater proportions in England,—despite the warnings of Casandras like Mr. J. D. Linton,—but the results are scarcely yet apparent on the walls of galleries. Nevertheless, even within the sacred precincts of Burlington House may be seen each year a few, or a very few, totally commendable pictures, and a goodly number of these pearls of rareness have been transported this year to the Champ de Mars. The first that happens



THE ARRIVAL OF THE PARDON

FROM THE PAINTING BY

A. GUILLOU





FRENCH SECTION.

BACCHANAL SCENE. FROM THE BAS-RELIEF IN WAX BY C. CLODION.

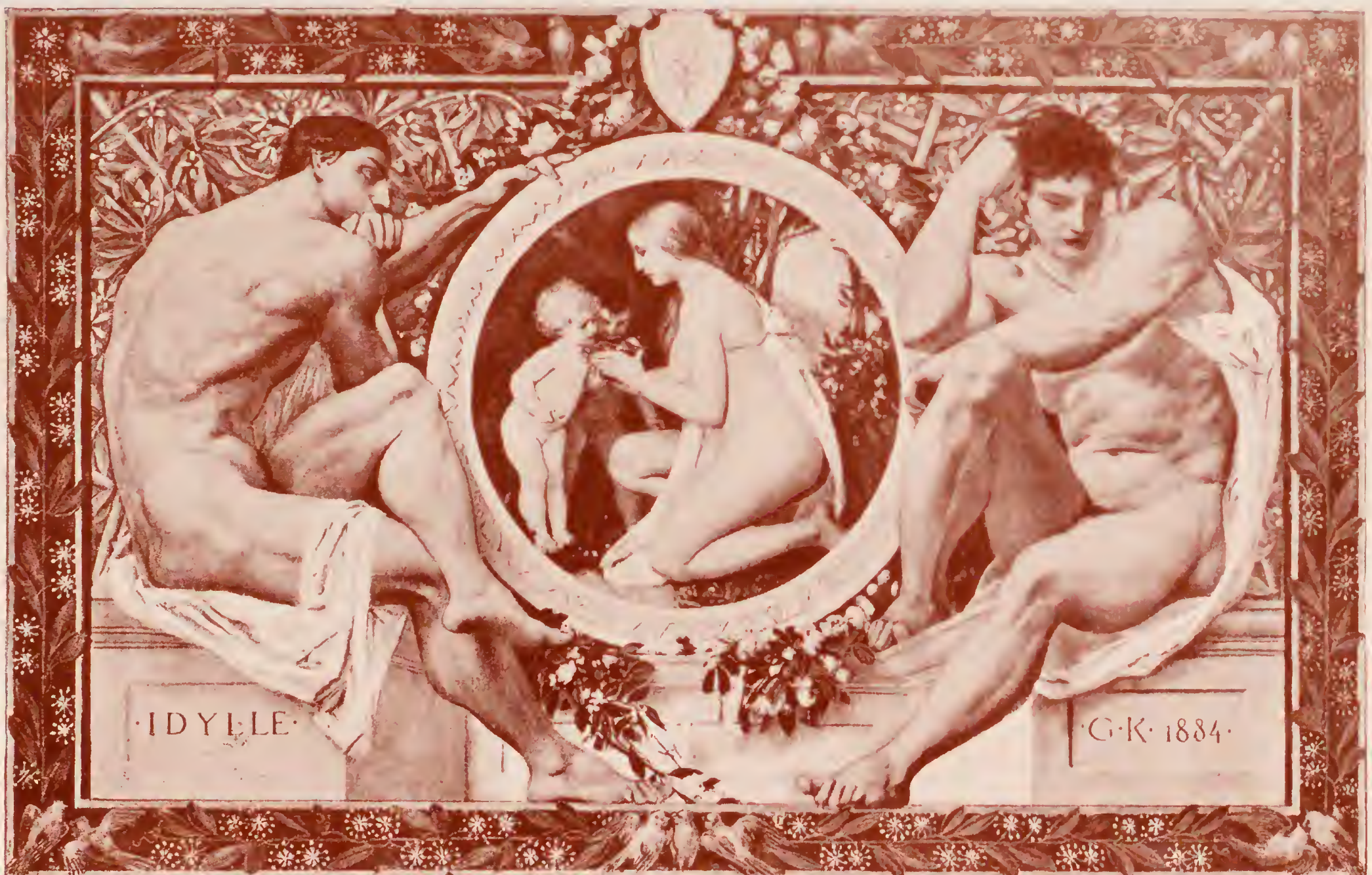
to fall under our notice is signed by a name which the London art critics hail each year with a droll sigh of joy:—"MR. STANHOPE FORBES is one of the most able exponents of the artistic problems suggested by the study of the figures in an open-air environment." "It has been said of the present (R. A.) exhibition—the Hundred and seventeenth!—that but for the Academicians it would be excellent. This is the way of the malcontent and the scorner. To those who have any of the true palladium feeling it will sound flippant, even sacrilegious. For the truth is, that this year the Academicians have surpassed themselves. It is not, of course, to be denied that there are pictures on the line which are plainly the work of men who can both paint and draw; nor is it to be gainsaid that among these recreants there are some who belong to the sacred Forty. But accidents will happen; there will be rebels while the world goes round. . . . Side by side with these, trimmers and rebels proclaimed, are men of whom, to judge by their present performances, it were vain to hope in the future. Chief among these is Mr. Waterhouse with a 'St. Eulalia,' which would seem better at home on the Salon line than here: the same thing may be said, allowing for differences of mastery and intention, of the fresh and brilliant picture of fisher-life and seaside lights and aspects contributed by Mr. Stanhope Forbes;" "Even as Mr. Stanhope Forbes stands alone in his excellent 'Fish-sale;'" etc., etc.

This clever painter, whose name thus shines like a good deed in a naughty world, is indeed one of the best of those modern renderers of "landscapes with figures," whose peculiar trade may be said to have been unknown to the older schools. No longer the result of a partnership, in which each artist painted in his specialty, nor yet an arrangement in which the conventional or decorative landscape set off the figure as a background, their pictures combine a double talent into a harmonious whole. The aspect of nature, in no ways falsified, lends her sentiment and her explanation to the particular message which the human figures are intended to convey; the artist contrives a subtler personification than the old Greek did with his naiads and hamadryads. The more important of Mr. Forbes's two contributions to the Exposition, reproduced in our wood-engraving, is one of his best examples. The original title, "THEIR EVER-SHIFTING HOME," has been translated in the official catalogue into "Une Famille de Nomades;" the theme is simply a wandering family of vagrants. The mother, somewhat more comely than usual, leads the dreary procession, carrying her child; a half-grown boy follows listlessly with a dog; and the van, which is house and home, drawn by a horse and a donkey, is seen at the top of the hill. The time of day is late autumn afternoon; the atmosphere is gray, and the

distant sunset is vaporous behind the dark tree trunks. The artist paints broadly and sympathetically, and his color—a rare thing among English painters—has no taint of crudeness.

This picture was first exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1887; in that of 1888 he was represented by "Village Harmonies," a study of rural musicians, now the property of the corporation of that Birmingham which, formerly the seat of the manufacture of "Brummagem rubbish," is now considered to be the most artistic town in England. The "Village Harmonies" is Mr. Forbes's second work in the Palais des Beaux-Arts. In the Royal Academy of 1889 his exhibit was "The Health of the Bride," a wedding-breakfast in the parlor of an inn; to the exhibition of the Painters in Oil Colors, of this year, he sent a lamp-light effect, "A Fisherman's Reading-room." "The fresh and brilliant picture of fisher-life," so approved by the spleenful critic quoted above, was a "Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach," exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1885.

THE character of the religious art of the Exposition is, naturally, very much that of the annual Salons. The most striking examples of the materialistic, the anecdotic or the irreverent rendering of sacred themes, have been weeded out in the process of selecting; but enough have passed the wickets of the Champ de Mars. The causes of this lack of spiritual-mindedness are plentiful enough—lack of faith, lack of refinement, over-estimation of purely technical qualities, etc., etc. M. Albert Wolff adds another for the "almost pitiful" state of French religious art—the fear of venturing on ground on which the old masters have said the last word. The somewhat conservative Anglo-Saxon critic is sometimes of the opinion that the modern French artists are not afraid of venturing anywhere. It is, perhaps, in strict accordance with the spirit of the age that the most worthy examples of this art are those in which the subjects are taken from modern life. The best Biblical scenes are nearly always those



GERMAN SECTION.]

IDYL. ALLEGORICAL DESIGN BY G. KLIMT.

THE PICNIC

FROM THE PAINTING BY

E. CLAUS



in which the elevation of the theme is rendered by some broader, atmospheric charm of color and sentiment—like Cazin's or like Demont's very beautiful "Les Lys" in the Salon of 1889—which is, in itself, quite modern, and unlike the methods of the old masters. One of the very best specimens of a modern subject, inspired with a simple and devout sentiment, is M. ALFRED GUILLOU's "ARRIVAL OF THE PARDON OF SAINTE-ANNE-DE-FOUESNANT, AT CONCARNEAU," reproduced in our photogravure. At the Salon of 1887, where it first appeared, its neighbors were of the usual uninspired type, with one or two exceptions. There was M. Louis Deschamp's "Sommeil de Jésus," also in the Exposition, "of the most perfect mediocrity;" the "Jeanne d'Arcs" of MM. Matejko and Lucas, which both made pretensions to rendering the heavenly nature of her inspirations, and the "Sainte Geneviève" of the American, Mr. Pearce, saintly to the extent of a gold ring around her head, and nothing more. On the other hand, there was Dagnan-Bouveret's "Pardon," one of the most admirable of his exhibits in the Exposition; M. Desrousseaux's "Dernière Heure," a priest carrying the sacrament to some dying peasant, and M. Muenier's "Bréviaire," in which another sits in his garden, his finger in his book, and peace in his soul. Something of this same peace may be found in M. Guillou's picture—the long procession of boats bearing the worshippers approaches the shore; in the foremost one are young girls in white, surrounding a gilded statuette of the Virgin and bearing a banner with her image, while two stalwart fishermen guide it carefully to land. The boats and their occupants, the sails and the banners, form a succession of objects relieved in low tones against a sky and a sea bathed in soft, pinkish light, the pale blues of the white dresses in the foreground furnishing the most valuable of half notes. In some way all this charm of light and color suggests the perfect peace of faith.

This artist only exhibits two other paintings, a young girl walking with her parents the evening of her first communion, and a very different subject, the last survivor of the famous "Vengeur." The latter work belongs to the Museum of Quimper; the "Pardon de Sainte-Anne-de-Fouesnant," to the Minister of Public Instruction and of the Fine Arts. The painter was born at Concarneau, and is a pupil of Cabanel and Bouguereau. He has received two medals, in 1877 and in 1881.

The painting of effects of sunlight is one of the difficult tasks held in great affection by the realistic modern French artists, and one in which, they flatter themselves, they succeed, or, rather, come near to succeeding, very much oftener than any one else. Their receipts for this very difficult operation vary from the conventional processes of the painters of the Institute to the eccentric methods of MM. Monet and Pissaro, and the results are equally dissimilar. It has been reserved, however, for a foreigner in the Fine Arts galleries to furnish a painting which to a very large number of the casual visitors will seem



UNITED STATES SECTION]
PORTRAIT. FROM THE PAINTING BY MISS A. E. KLUMPKE.

12

THE VOICE OF THE TOCSIN

FROM THE PAINTING BY

A. MAIGNAN



IT seems to have been a premonition of some impending tempest of war and alarm that inspired M. Maignan in his work, "The Tocsin," rather than a reminiscence of past disasters. The grass grows green over the ravages of old campaigns; it is the dread of coming ruin that illuminates seers, prophets and painters. By a bold figure of painting—so to speak—the artist has here personified both the clangor of tumult and alarm from the mouth of the great bell, and the hurry and fear that set its iron tongue in motion. A whirl of figures, clamoring louder than Ulysses' ghosts on the Styx, take birth from these mighty reverberations, and stream off in the dusky air over the land already a prey to fire and murder. The strong powers that tug at the bell-ropes are wild with apprehension, the torn tricolor is flung on the parapet, and the blaze of the conflagration flares through the smoke. The speed and noise in the composition, the tremendous swing of the tocsin and the sudden appearance and sweeping flight of the personified clangor, are so well given that the spectator loses sight of the artist's invention and imagination in his admiration of his technical skill. "The vain mirages of the imagination," against which it is now the fashion of the Parisian critics to warn the French painters, are here more than abundantly justified.

The work of the artist has always been marked by a certain distinction of invention and composition, and once or twice—as in his "Dante encountering Mathilda"—he has lifted both himself and his audience bodily into that pure land of fantasy which most men, artists and laymen, never even hear of. But for a certain heroic loftiness of flight, a sort of inspired vision like Ezekiel's, he has as yet done nothing equal to this picture of tumult and warning. Before it, one learns with surprise that the painter is really a lawyer, having taken his degree as a jurisconsult before definitely adopting the career of an artist. He was born at Beaumont (Sarthe) in 1845, and it is related that his father, much displeased at first at the substitution of a painter for a magistrate in his family, has since been enabled to reconcile himself to the transformation.

While still pursuing his legal studies, Maignan amused himself somewhat as an amateur in the atelier of Jules Noël, but when the change of vocation was decided upon he became a pupil of Luminais, and first exhibited in 1867. Six years later the successes of his career began: in 1874, he received a medal of the third class; in 1876, one of the second; in 1879, one of the first, and in 1883 the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor. His "Dante and Mathilda" is in the Luxembourg, and though not removed to the Exposition buildings is officially entered in the catalogue, and is entitled to compete for the recompenses. This has been done in the case of a great many works of art, too large or too important to be transferred, or for which the overcrowded galleries of the Exposition afforded no lodgement. His "Awakening of Juliet," from the Salon of 1886, and now the property of the city of Lyons, is likewise catalogued in his exhibit at the Champ de Mars without actually



FRENCH SECTION.]

DANTE ENCOUNTERING MATHILDA. FROM THE PAINTING BY A. MAIGNAN.



FRENCH SECTION.]

THE DREAM. FROM THE PAINTING BY E. DETAILLE.

being there. On the walls of the Palais des Beaux-Arts, however, he has no less than eight important canvases, all of them owned by various museums, clubs and cities, excepting his sombre study of William the Conqueror, fallen half naked and head foremost from his bed of death and abandoned by all his attendants. The "Voix du Tocsin" is the property of the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts, and was exhibited in the Salon of 1888.

The difficulties of design and color in a composition like this are so many that a word or two as to the manner in which the painter has overcome them may be worth recording. In the first place, as is well known, a large bell in a tower of any kind is generally swung on heavy timbers and so surrounded by beams, walls and such other impedimenta that the instrument itself is half concealed, and the designer who wishes to represent its motion finds himself hampered by the intervention of these immovable and uninspiring supports. M. Maignan has contrived a belfry which is possible enough and which permits a free view of the swinging monster. The bulk of masonry and timber which carries it is behind and outside the scene; the long bell-ropes, carried up and out of sight, descend again over a curved framework which is sometimes actually used, and the ringers below have a clear space in which to agitate themselves. The modern device of having the bell remain motionless and rung only by the swinging of the clappers, would of course have been fatal in this case. The harmony of color in the crowded composition is equally remarkable; the cool tones are all in the patch of gray sky in the upper left-hand corner; below are the warmer neutral tints of the smoke and mist, the bluish green of the bell and the flesh tones of the figures declining into grayish and purple shadows. The flag below and a spot of flame from the burning roofs furnish the high notes of color. The anatomical science displayed, especially in the straining figures of the bell-ringers, has been specially commented upon. The modern French school does not lack for painters technically well equipped, nor do some of the others for painters with imagination, but so judicious a combination of the seer and the savant is not often met with. The painter was awarded a first-class medal by the Jury of Painting for his exhibit at the Exposition.

NONE of the foreign fine arts exhibits have suffered more—naturally—from the aversion of the European governments to take official cognizance of the Exposition than Germany. Her display of paintings in oil is limited to sixty-four canvases, and of water-colors and designs to twenty-four. Many

LOVE AT THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

FROM THE PAINTING BY

L. O. MERSON



THE WOLF OF AGUBBIO

FROM THE PAINTING BY

LUC-OLIVIER MERSON





